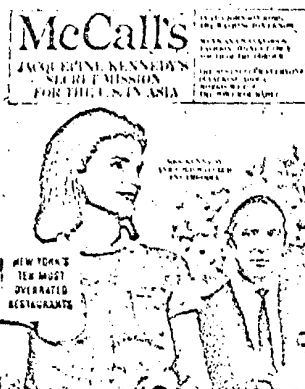


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PRESS



Schrag (left) and Cousins:
Some irreverence helps



Cousinly Love

Norman Cousins, editor of the Saturday Review, began sprinting on the streets of New York long before anyone else was even jogging. His circuit for almost a year has been fixed: he dashes between the offices of the Saturday Review on Madison Avenue and the offices of McCall's magazine on Park Avenue. "That's about 150 yards," says Cousins. "I guess I do that in 18 or 19 seconds."

Cousins, 52, sold the Saturday Review to the McCall Corp. in 1961 in exchange for McCall stock. He holds 90,000 shares, which last week were worth about \$3.4 million. In addition, Cousins has become editor in chief of the corporation's magazines—Redbook as well as McCall's and SR. Since last summer, he has been devoting much of his time to keeping the monthly McCall's (circulation: 8,545,839) ahead of the Ladies' Home Journal (circulation: 6,779,059) in the numbers battle among women's magazines, while continuing to read most of the articles for the weekly Saturday Review as well as write its editorials.

Challenge: "I'm not an expert on women's magazines," says Cousins, "but it's a challenge to speak to women. Fortunately, I like them." (Cousins has five daughters, including an adopted daughter, Shigeko Sasamori, one of the 25 "Hiroshima Maidens" he helped bring to the U.S. thirteen years ago.) The McCall Corp. removed Robert Stein, 44, from the editorship of McCall's ten months ago and James Fixx, 36, a former feature editor for Cousins at the Saturday Review, was moved into his place.

As Fixx has phased into McCall's, Cousins has been taking a direct hand in editing the magazine—turning up story ideas, choosing pictures, editing articles and even buttonholing newsstand dealers to find out how the magazine

is selling. Cousins has added editorials (in the June issue Sen. Mark Hatfield calls for an abolition of the draft and the establishment of a volunteer professional Army), and a feature on "The Outdoor Woman." Says Cousins: "It has to be a woman's magazine first with such things as beauty, fashion, food, wine and sex, but when you do a good job in those fields, then I think you can go into things that give a magazine its character."

One of the best ideas the new management has had was to commission the food critic Michael Field to spend two months investigating New York restaurants. "People were constantly recommending places to eat, and when I got to them I wondered why," says Fixx. Field's report, "New York's Ten Most Overrated Restaurants," in the New York edition of the June McCall's, punctures the reputations of some of the city's putative great kitchens. (The Colony: "From beginning to end, a dinner for two was a disappointment, compounded ... by a check of truly Olympian proportions." The Sign of the Dove: "An indication of the depths to which American restaurant cooking can sink and yet attract an affluent and fashionable clientele.")

House Radical: The SR can use the same sort of irreverence. Many of the magazine's contributors and editors are well on the other side of the generation gap—book critic Granville Hicks, 66; Katharine Kuh, 63; Herbert R. Mayes, 67—and the magazine tends to be pious. "Kenneth Rexroth always makes good reading," says one critic, "but the magazine seems to lack a sense of alertness. It tends to read like an adult education course." This gray tone, however, has not prevented circulation from rising. It was 248,079 in 1961. It is now 521,074.

Last month Cousins promoted Peter Schrag, 36, from assistant education editor to the newly created post of executive editor, just below Cousins on the masthead. Schrag, who once taught American studies at Amherst, has helped loosen up SR's education coverage a bit, bringing in critics of the education establishment and saying less on professors, touting their own programs.

"Cousins wants to keep the organization alive," says Schrag. "He feels he needs someone who can kick things the magazine to explore the possibility for social and political thought and so

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